RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 13th September, 1991/ Bhadra 22, 1913 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

RE. VISIT OF A DELEGATION OF SC/ST MPs TO RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

श्री आनन्द प्रकाश गौतम माननीय सभापति जी, मैं एक मिनट का समय चाहता हूं। आज हम अनुसूचित जाति और जनजाति के लोग राष्ट्रपति से समय लेकर मिलने गए तो राष्ट्रपति ने अपने पुराने कानून के तहत अनुसूचित जाति के 40-50 लोगों से मिलने से इंकार कर दिया... (व्यवधान) वे लोग वापस आए। इस अपमान के लिए जब दोनों सदनों के लोग गए हुए थे, हम अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति के लोग आज की राज्य सभा और लोकसभा की कार्यवाही का बहिष्कार करते हैं।

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Water Resources Development and Management Project for SIPS

*261. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRI SOM PAL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that "Water Resources Development and Management Project for Salinity Ingress Prevention Scheme" is under Government's consideration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; whether it is a fact that the expected Dutch assistance is not coming forth;

(c) whether Government are contemplating any other source for funding to prevent the salinity ingress on Gujarat coast;

(d) what is the area affected by salinity ingress in Gujarat; and

(e) what measures are being taken to prevent salinity ingress and what is the investment made and proposed in future for preventing the salinity ingress?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The project seeks to prevent the lateral ingress of sea water in the lower aquifer along the Saurashtra coastal line in Amreli, Bhavnagar and Kachchh districts of Gujarat. The project further provides for lift irrigation benefits in about 11,000 ha. within these areas. The estimated cost of the project as of 1988 is Rs. 47 crores. The project is in pipeline for Dutch assistance. Comments of Government of Gujarat on the report of the Dutch Formulation Mission are awaited. Therefore, at present, there is no need to explore other sources of funding. The estimated area affected by salinity ingress problem in Gujarat is approximately 10.65 lakh ha. Measures taken to prevent salinity ingress in Gujarat include construction of tidal regulators, bandharas, check dams, reservoirs, percolation tanks, nala plugs and afforestation. Uptil June, 1991 an amount of Rs. 72.39 crores has been incurred. During 1991-92 it is proposed to spend an amount of Rs. 23.83 crores for preventing salinity ingress.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: By making an elaborate statement giving certain facts, the Minister has done good work. There are almost 11 lakh hectares under salinity ingress in Gujarat and total cultivable area is 96 lakh hectares. Therefore, 10 lakh hectares is a sizeable area. Gujarat Saurashtra has got the longest sea-coast of 1,600 kilometres. But, I think, the Minister may enlighten me whether this estimate is the latest one. I think this estimate was done long back.

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Chimanbhai Mehta

The figure is always increasing. Prevention of salinity ingress has not been a successful programme yet. Of course, some attempt has been made. According to the Government's admission in a note that they had circulated to Gujarat MPs a few days back, Rs. 1,18 crores was sanctioned and hardly Rs. 70 crores they could spend. It is a very meagre amount for reclaiming 11 lakh hectares. Moreover, it is an incomplete figure. Therefore, my question, as it stands, is: what is the latest estimate? If this is not the latest estimate, the Minister may ask the Gujarat Government as to what is the latest figure? I think this was the figure around 1980. Subsequently it might have been partially updated. But salinity ingress has increased. Since it is an all-India problem and crores of acres are coming under salinity ingress, I would like to know whether the Government of India has prepared a proper detailed plan to counteract this. For irrigation we are doing sufficiently well to an extent, but this is a double loss. Here the land goes out of cultivation. In the case of irrigation you make the land fertile.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question now.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Therefore, I request him to give the reply in a little detail.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, it is true that this is an all-India question. But the intensity of the problem differs from State to State. It is particularly bad in the State of Gujarat where there is a long sea cost and probably because of the subterranean formation, the ingress of salinity is a little higher than in many other coastal areas. Therefore, the Government of Gujarat has set up a study team which was really done in 1972 and they got the report. Based on this report, an agency was set up to study the whole thing and after that we got the report in 1979. Again they gave a report in 1982. According to the reports given to us and suggestions given in the reports, we have now started the improved versions of salinity ingress protection in the State of Gujarat.

Now, as the hon. Member himself has said, sufficient amount of money has been put and more money is going to be spent in this particular scheme. Well, the scheme is being conducted by an agency which is known as Water Resources Development and Management project and they are implementing the shceme with assistance from Netherlands. Therefore, in this we would say that the work has been done, and we have got the assessment made with the Dutch assistance. They have given their report in March, 1991. We have sent this report to the Government of Gujarat about six months ago. We are still awaiting their reaction to this report and as soon as we get the reaction from them we shall take further action.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, as I said, sufficient attention is not being paid to implement this scheme. Only Rs. 72 crores has been spent inspite of Rs. 118 crores earmarked. In 1982 the Government of Gujarat gave a figure saying that 11 lakh hectares of area is affected by salinity ingress. This was given almost ten years ago. I know in the coastal region, people do not have drinking water. They have to go to other areas to fetch drinking water because what they get is salty water. Therefore, my relevant question still awaits a reply. It does not matter; whatever reply you have given, I am satisfied. But I was a little surprised when the Minister said that they are waiting for the comments on the report from the Government of Gujarat. The Government of India have circulated a note to the Gujarat MPs. On page 7 of the note there is an important point. According to me it is a relevant point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you giving comments of the Government of Gujarat?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I am giving the comments of the Government

of India itself. It is written in the note that we have to do tidal regulation to prevent salty water coming in. Precisely for that a bridge across the Khambhat Gulf was to be constructed and a dam also. Now it is written in the note that there is a proposal of the Government of Gujarat for constructing a dam across the Khambhat Gulf with the Dutch assistance. Recently the Dutch have communicated that the proposed project does not fit into their scope of activity and therefore, they are unable to consider the proposal favourably.

Therefore, I have asked, if the Netherlands Government is not prepared. .... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: How are you presuming that they are not prepared?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: It is written here. The Government of India itself has stated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, has the Dutch Government said 'no' to funding?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: As I have indicated, they have raised certain points and we have referred those points to the Gujarat Government. If they agree to those points...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then, they will be funding. That is, funding is subject to fulfilling those conditions.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Yes, that is right. And they relate to environment and many other things. If the Government of Gujarat is willing to meet those terms and conditions that the Dutch agency has raised, then we still feel that it would be possible to get the Dutch assistance. And we are quite hopeful of getting it.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, the Minister is right and I am also right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very good. Everybody is right.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: He is referring to something else while I am referring particularly to the tidal wave ingression. And there, I am referring to the note of the Government of India where there is a reference to the Netherlands Government. The Dutch have recently indicated that the proposed projects does not fit into the present scope of activities and therefore, they are unable to consider the proposal favourably. So, I am not saying that what he has said... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is: It it a fact? That is all.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I am asking the question now. If Netherlands are not coming forward, then there is the World Bank which is another source. Sometimes we go there also because, as I understand, the Government of India does not have enough resources. Or, would you allow some other non-governmental agencies because this is a very important project for us? It also shortens the distance betwen Saurashtra in Southern Gujarat and Bombay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question is whether they will permit private parties and do it.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: No. Cooperatives are also prepared. There are non-governmental agencies and cooperatives who are prepared because they are affected. Therefore, my question is whether they will explore in that direction.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, this project across Khambhat has nothing to do with the salinity project or salinity problem that Gujarat is facing. It is another project altogether for which Dutch assistance also has been asked for.

MR. CHAIRMAN: These are two separate things.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: They are two different things and this has nothing to do with salinity. It has something to do with the problems in Gujarat and the water management in Gujarat. This particular thing is not connected with the reduction of salinity. As far as private agencies are concerned, we welcome their participation. We

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

have, as a matter of fact, already requested several voluntary bodies there, particularly from the environmental angle which is very impotrant in this ingress of salinity in Gujarat, to cooperate with us. Several good agencies have come forward and we are exploring the possibility of fruitful cooperation with them.

SHRI SOM PAL: Hon. Chairman, Sir, the soil salinity ingress is afflicting vast tracts of arable fertile land in North India too. And this phenomenon has already assumed critical proportions and dimensions. As a farmer, from whatever little I know about this salinity ingress phenomenon, to me, the factors responsible for this are indiscriminate use of fertilisers, water seepage through unlined canals and other channels, irrigation with brackish water drawn by tube-wells and the conventional and age-old unscientific method of flood irrigation. To tackle this menace, a comprehensive and integrated approach is needed which can be planned only through an active interaction and coordination between the Agriculture Ministry and the Irrigation Ministry. My question is whether any such survey on all India-basis has been conducted and what are the results? Secondly, has the Government formulated any such long term comprehensive plan? If yes, has any provision been made in the 8th Plan and if not, is there a proposal to make such a provision in the 8th Plan?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, these are two different aspects of a question. Salinity in a soil occurs because of different reasons. The inland areas that the hon. Member is referring to are in northern India. Here the problem afflicting the State of Gujarat is salinity seeping into the coastal areas and the coastal areas which were fertile and which were giving sweet drinking water, are now yielding only brackish or saltish water because of mismanagement, heavy use, heavy pumping and several other things like that. The hon. Member has given certain reasons which are absolutely true. These are the real reasons why salinity occurs in the non-coastal areas and such salinity problem has arisen in large tracts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In Haryana also.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: In Haryana also. In all these areas where heavy irrigation takes place, this problem has arisen for which different treatment and different kind of schemes have been devised and they will be included in the 8th Plan.

SHRI SOM PAL: Sir, piecemeal plans have been made. I would like to know whether they will have integrated planning and coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture on all-India basis.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: This is all done in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has explained about the northern part and the west coast of the country. In the eastern coast, right from Kanyakumari to West Bengal border in the coastal areas, due to over—exploitation of water by the farmers while tapping the ground water potential the saline water enters into the land there by making lakhs of hectares of land saline and makes it non-usable. The State Governments concerned are sending the proposal including Tamil Nadu and my State, Pondicherry, to the Government of India. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have they sent the proposals?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The proposals have been sent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, you want to know as to what is the position?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: No, Sir. I go one step further. In order to stop the exploitation of water from being tapped, the Government brought a legislation. The State Governments have brought legislation not allowing the farmers to dig bore-wells within certain metres. To avoid that, there is a legislation in some State. But in some States in the coastal areas of the east coast, they have not implemented it as a result of which the saline water

comes in and the fertile land is being spoiled. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Central Government will insist upon the State Governments to bring a legislation to save the land from over-exploitation of water and thereby stop the saline water from coming in. Further, what is the Central Government going to do to avoid saline water entering into the land area?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, several schemes have been initiated to prevent salinity in other States also. Wherever the State Governments have cooperated fruitfully with the Central Government, effective results have been obtained. I cannot give the details of the schemes in Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu at present, but certainly, the seriousness of the problem and the way to deal with the same has been taken up in hand and we have achieved varying results. I suppose that the hon. Member is particularly keen that this damage should not occur. We will keep his ideas in view and we will review whatever has been done in the States and if there is anything lacking, we shall try and implement it with the cooperation of the State Governments.

श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे : महोदय, सौराष्ट्र में सोमनाथ से लेकर जो वेरावल तक समुद्र किनारा है और सारे सौराष्ट्र जो एक आम केसर के नाम पर प्रख्यात है, उसके जितने गार्डेन्स हैं समुद्र के किनारे पर वे सब नीचे समुद्र का पानी आने के कारण या सैलिनिटी इन्ग्रेस की वजह से सूख गए हैं। पूरा एरिया जो कच्छ तक जाता है वहां भी जितनी खेती की जमीन है उसमें भी पानी नहीं है।

श्री सभापति : वे आपको प्राब्लम मान रहे हैं।

श्री अनन्त राय देवशंकर दवे : गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने जो सजेश्चन दिया है, सरकार के पास जो सजेश्चन है

I want to know whether they are going to carry it out or not; whether the Government is aware that the Gujarat Government had carried out some rough survey around 50 years ago and had given an estimate that lakhs of acres are under the pressure of salinity ingress; what the details available with the Centre are and what steps are being taken in this regard. My second supplementary is why the Saurashtra and Kuchchh coastal lines were not surveyed.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, the details given by the State Government of Gujarat are with us and based on that we have made all the schemes and the latest scheme with Dutch assistance has come as a result of the details of the surveys that have been made by the State of Gujarat and by us and also together. The schemes are being sanctioned and Saurashtra is one of the worst-affected areas...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Saurashtra and Kuchchh need special care.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, we have done our best to meet those problems there.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, I want to know from the hon. Minister one thing. Thousands of acres of land have become saline across the Gulf of Khambhat. I want to know whether this project includes the saline and of Khambhat or not and what the total cost of this project will be.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, the total cost has been given in the statement that I have laid on the Table of the House and this area that has been identiled by the Government of Gujarat, all those areas are included in the scheme.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, he has not included Khambhat because at that time also...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said, Khambhat is also included. Do you want the break-up?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, you are talking about the bridge. In fact, bridge comes over the head of the dam and the dam is for the prevention of salinity. It doesn't matter if he cannot answer it just now; he may ask the Department to go into in because it is not just a question

of bridge for a passer-by to walk upon; it is a dam to prevent salinity ingress and the project will come over it. It is a multi-purpose project and Dutch assistance is involved in that also, not only in other things.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: It is obvious if we make a dam and there is some collection of water or some channel is made, we have to make a bridge to cross that. If that bridge is made to cross that channel, it does not mean that the bridge is meant for prevention of salinity..

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: No; dam is meant for prevention of salinity.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: All right. Then we have to make a bridge over it for the convenience of people who want to cross that channel.

*262. [*The questioner (Shri Dhuleshwar Meena) was absent. For answer, vide* cols. 35-36 ..infra.]

Criteria to determine categories of farmers

*263. SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI:
SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA:†

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any criteria to categories farmers as (i) small (ii) marginal and (ii) big; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Shiv Partap Mishra.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The categorisation of farmers into small and marginal has been developed under the poverty alleviation programmes of the Government. The small and marginal farmers under the Integrated Rural Development Programme of the Government are defined as follows:—

Small Farmers: A cultivator with a land holding of two hectares or below is a small farmers. Where former has Class-I irrigated land, as defined in the State Land Ceiling Legislation with one hectare or less he will also be considered as small farmer. Where the land is irrigated but not of the Class-I variety, suitable conversion ratio may be adopted by the State Government with a ceiling of two hectares.

Marginal Farmer: A person with land holding of one hectore or below is a marginal farmer. In the case of Class-I irrigated land, the ceiling will be 0.5 sectore.

The land holding limits for Drought prone Areas Programme/Desert Development Programme Areas for small and marginal farmers are given in the Annexure.

There is no specific definition of large farmers. However, according to the Agricultural Census 1985-86, conducted by Ministry of Agriculture, large operational holdings are those which have an area of 10 hectares or more.